

University Village Urban Renewal Plan

A Vision for Revitalization

Draft Final Report

Kinzelman Kline Gossman
Goody Clancy Associates

Date: June 30, 2004



Table of Contents

<i>I. Introduction</i>	<i>P.3</i>	<i>VI. University Plaza & Jefferson Avenue Redevelopment</i>	<i>P.71</i>
<i>Study Goals & Objectives</i>			
<i>Local & Regional Context</i>		<i>VII. Best Practice Guidelines</i>	<i>76</i>
<i>Urban Assessment Findings</i>		<i>VIII. Urban Renewal Status</i>	<i>88</i>
<i>II. Market Assessment</i>	<i>24</i>	<i>IX. Organization, Implementation, Funding and Public Safety</i>	<i>91</i>
<i>Charrette Findings</i>			
<i>Trade Area Characteristics</i>			
<i>Strategic Market Positioning</i>			
<i>III. Redevelopment Opportunities</i>	<i>46</i>		
<i>IV. Vision Plan</i>	<i>59</i>		
<i>V. Schedule of Uses</i>	<i>68</i>		
<i>Future Parking Distribution</i>			
<i>Phasing Sequence</i>			

Introduction

In April of 2002 the consulting team of Kinzelman Kline Gossman / Goody Clancy Associates was selected by a steering committee comprised of representatives from the City of Cincinnati, University of Cincinnati, Corryville Community Council, University Village Association, property owners, and resident stakeholders to prepare an update to the 1993 Urban Design Plan for University Village in Corryville, recommend physical changes, and prepare a strategic revitalization and implementation strategy.

History tells us that all communities will change regardless of their citizens' desires or involvement. However, by guiding a community through the appropriate planning process, stakeholders can assure that change aligns itself with a community's values, personality, and economic sustainability. An interactive strategic planning process can provide communities with the necessary road map to guide their growth, develop successful partnerships, and manage change more effectively. This so called road map is especially critical to the University Village area in light of its proximity to such a high concentration of competing urban commercial districts.

This report presents findings in a brief outline format as a means provide the greatest amount of stakeholder involvement while addressing the full scope of study goals and objectives. These include the objectives set forth at the outset of the study as well as goals and objectives identified as a result of ongoing work and adopted by the steering committee task force

Study Goals & Objectives

- Prepare an updated and expanded survey of current land uses.
- Provide land use and urban design recommendations that further define and support the University Height's merchandising theme including recommending land uses complimentary to neighboring public and private institutions in the areas of housing, parking and commercial development.
- Prepare recommendations for complimenting and expanding existing design plans for streetscapes, public spaces, gateways, landscape and other physical elements.
- Develop an Implementation Strategy ordering the implementation of projects of the approved Plan.
- Recommend funding options that will support the Development Strategy
- Assess parking needs for both existing and proposed land uses.
- Address public safety as a major concern of the users of this District.
- Examine & comment on the impact of local and regional transportation facilities

Task Force Goals & Objectives

- *Improve Safety*
 - *Reclaim business district for evening & weekend uses*
 - *Increase traffic & visibility along Vine*
 - *Develop broad consensus for appropriate policing policy and activities*
 - *Remove safety-related disincentives to new investment*
- *Create a balance of retail, dining, and entertainment choices*
 - *Leverage strengths of existing tenants (Kroger, Bogarts, others...)*
 - *Broaden market appeal of entertainment venues*
 - *Incentivize private developers and business owners / operators to re-invest and modernize.*
 - *Encourage development of neighborhood-serving businesses*
- *Create stronger relationship to University & Hospitals*
 - *Improve pedestrian friendliness along streets & alleys*
 - *Intensify office, housing, and other complimentary uses.*

Regional Context

The University Village area is located approximately three miles north of Downtown Cincinnati immediately east of the University of Cincinnati and south of the University Medical Campus. Interstates 71, 74, and 75 are all within a 2 mile radius. Taft Street, McMillan Avenue, Vine Street / Jefferson Avenue, and Martin Luther King Boulevard provide the principal arterial access to the interstates.

The area benefits from the region's second highest concentration of employers with the University of Cincinnati and the Health Alliance (including University Hospital) ranking one and two respectively among tri-state employers (source: Cincinnati Business Courier, April 7, 2003)

Including the nearby Cincinnati Zoo, some of Cincinnati's most noteworthy cultural, shopping and entertainment destinations are located within a 5 mile radius of the district.



Future tenancing within University Village must be complimentary to newer and established commercial districts

Proximity:

- Close to areas largest employment base
(Hospitals, University, & Downtown)
(OKI estimates 220,000 trips per day)
- Convenient to the areas most significant cultural amenities



1995 OKI Region Daily person Trips

To	Butler	Clermont	Downtown	UC					
From									
Butler	741,922	4,471	9,362	4,978					
Clermont	4,131	335,095	9,400	5,368					
Downtown	9,446	9,232	81,418	16,091					
UC	6,466	5,873	10,388	78,956	3,750	32,337	40,019	24,302	
Ham E	2,102	34,085	6,905	3,762	91,394	20,396	6,954	3,232	
Ham NE	26,439	46,740	35,064	34,402	19,015	586,821	102,902	32,163	3
Ham N	72,223	16,697	34,701	32,688	8,358	101,066	466,133	89,330	2
Ham W	21,119	6,440	51,743	26,250	2,711	32,700	87,509	592,075	
Warren	40,056	9,169	3,120	2,639	1,202	38,598	20,115	2,715	24
Boone	946	1,997	4,820	2,264	986	4,048	3,162	3,724	
Campbell	1,504	1,885	9,665	5,331	1,792	8,344	8,100	5,268	
Kenton	2,181	4,627	16,265	7,537	851	9,779	11,215	9,388	
Dearborn	1,267	0	825	963	642	1,525	2,169	6,298	
Total	929,802	476,311	273,676	221,229	174,546	947,992	869,538	845,226	36

Notes: Data from 1995 OKI household trip survey
The survey collected daily activity/trip data for 3000 households in the OKI Region
All data is weighted and expanded (expansion factor is 232.49)
All geocoded person trips are considered. Total 'weighted' and 'expanded' person trips are 6267912
OKI Regional Council of Governments (November 1996)

Competing Districts; Clifton

The Calhoun / Clifton Heights Neighborhood, Ludlow Gaslight District / Clifton neighborhood, and Mount Auburn neighborhoods that border the district developed along with Cincinnati's first bedroom communities in the late 19th and early 20th century. The Clifton Heights and Clifton Neighborhoods are each served by neighborhood commercial districts that function in both a competitive and complimentary niche.

Ludlow / Clifton:

Clifton (to the northwest) has maintained a large measure of its original reputation as an affluent neighborhood of stately homes and institutions. The Ludlow Avenue Gaslight District runs east to west through the neighborhood and remains a vibrant and walk-able neighborhood commercial street with a range of international dining venues, varied retail / service tenant mix, and an independent grocer. The Esquire Theatre anchors the district and supports its reputation one of the region's few "arts" cinemas.

Local and national franchises including Petersen's, Skyline Chili, and Pizzeria Uno compliment the eclectic mix of shops and dining destinations such as Toku Baru, Ambar India, and Shaky Puddin'. Burnet Woods and the Clifton Fountain provide a delightful setting to enjoy a Greater's Ice Cream or a Sitwell's Coffee.



The Clifton Fountain contributes to the unique identity of the Ludlow Gaslight District

Mt. Auburn



Mt. Auburn, to the east, was established as one of Cincinnati's most affluent neighborhoods with a large number of stately homes and institutions remaining to this day. Like so many "first-ring" neighborhoods, the area has undergone a significant transformation as a result of impacts associated with the development of Interstate 71, and the "urban flight" characteristic of first-ring communities throughout the country. The adjacent blocks along Highland Avenue are located along a principal access route to *Children's*, *Jewish*, and *University Hospitals* and are characterized by a larger concentration of office and institutional uses.

Commercial uses are concentrated along Reading road along what is today a suburban style automotive-oriented corridor which lacks a significant core of neighborhood serving retail or service offerings.

Recent economic development studies recommend that corridor redevelopment should focus on medical, research and other technology-based industries.

Clifton Heights

The Clifton Heights District immediately west of University Plaza and University Village is scheduled to undergo a substantial transformation. Current plans call for the removal of dilapidated residential and commercial structures in a four block area between Vine Street and West Clifton Avenue. The proposed program of uses calls for four to five story development along each side of Calhoun Street, 90,000 to 100,000 square feet of new ground-floor retail uses (up to 250,000 square feet total), a 1000 space parking garage, a retail market pavilion, new neighborhood park, and upper floor housing for both student and non-student populations. Strategic positioning calls for major retail brands including cutting-edge fashion, athletic and sporting goods, college oriented apparel, home furnishings and accessories, as well as traditional convenience and service retail offerings. (source: Madison Marquette, "Calhoun Street Marketplace" Promotional Materials, November 2001)



Construction of the first phase of the Calhoun Street Redevelopment began this fall.



The above perspective depicts the proposed character of the Calhoun Street marketplace

Uptown Crossings

This same consulting team recently completed a revitalization study to, in part, determine a strategic redevelopment approach for the Uptown Crossing district immediately north of Corryville.

Revitalization of the Uptown Crossings area is envisioned to provide new housing, office, service, and retail spaces catering to the university and institutional communities. The proposed program for new retail and commercial space is limited to approximately 50,000 square feet, primarily located at the southwest corner of Erchenbrecker & Vine and along the Ludlow / Jefferson corridor. While maintaining and upgrading the quality of existing homes, the plan proposes the development of new housing geared toward seniors, empty nesters, and young professional markets that have proven to be successful in older urban districts.

“Institutional” Districts:

In addition to the districts listed above each local institution provides some level of on-campus supporting retail, dining, and service uses. These include UC’s on-site outlets and the planned Varsity Village



The plan above depicts the proposed Uptown Crossings Redevelopment

Corryville; Local Context

Corryville / University Village:

Over its lifespan University Village has maintained both a local and regional draw. On one hand, the Vine Street (“Short Vine”) corridor functions as the hub of neighborhood-oriented service and retail activity; on the other, it has a long-standing regional reputation as an entertainment-oriented destination. Over the years the district has experienced a gradual decline in patronage in both segments due to several factors including institutional expansion, significant alterations to the transportation network, changing demographics, safety concerns, and a lack of investment throughout the neighborhood.

The “Short Vine” district of today is characterized by a rich collection of streetcar era (and older) commercial structures. A mid 1960’s urban renewal project known as University Plaza disrupted the flow of traffic that gave rise to the commercial district, though the effects of the disruption were not pronounced until the mid-1980’s.

A Kroger Store has been in continuous operation and serves as the major anchor of the University Plaza site. Walgreens Pharmacy, Blockbuster Video and several specialty retailers are housed within an aging and tired looking super block structure that could be redeveloped as a new neighborhood center.

“Bogarts” anchors the historic “Short-Vine” district. While currently best known for alternative acts, Bogarts has hosted a very long list of national recording artists across a broad range of genres. That reputation of the performance venue still provides a tremendous amount of name recognition to the district.

Several restaurants, bars, and coffee houses still cater to the university student population although the balance of tenanting has shifted to a higher concentration of “body art” and other non-traditional vendors.

1993 Plan Summary

Many of the issues facing Corryville and the University Village District remain the same today as they were in 1993. The prior study, conducted by the City of Cincinnati Office of Architecture and Urban Design, cited abundant crime and loitering, negative media portrayal, lack of identity, poor access, the disconnection of Vine, and unsafe parking areas as major reasons for deterioration of the area.

While many of the recommendations of that report are similar to those within this update there are notable differences as well. From a land use standpoint, the prior plan recommended the expansion of the commercial district to the north and discouraged development of residential units along Short Vine between University and Martin Luther King Boulevard. Furthermore, while noting the desirability of improving access to the Short-Vine district, the prior plan did not explore the potential impact of redevelopment of the University Plaza site or the modification of the super block.

Despite significant streetscape and wayfinding enhancements, there continue to be significant problems with property maintenance and upkeep, crime, and loitering. Cruising and disruptive public assemblies have grown into a problem of such magnitude that many merchants are not able to operate at hours that are crucial to the economic sustainability of neighborhood retail and service providers.

As a result, tenancing has continued to shift toward uses that are not complimentary to the neighborhood.

Several developments in the interim period point to the potential for dramatic improvements. Included among these are the fact that area institutions and the university have found common ground with area merchants, property owners and neighborhood organizations and are poised to take an active role in redevelopment efforts under the guidance of the Uptown Consortium. At the same time, private developers have recognized the potential market for new housing and a significant number of new market-rate housing units have been developed.

Redevelopment Potential

The success of recent market-rate housing developments south of Martin Luther King Boulevard have demonstrated there is demand for modern housing alternatives that cater to the workforces of the area's major institutions. These new housing projects lend promise for on-going reinvestment in the neighborhood and a revitalization of the commercial district.

Future redevelopment efforts should leverage the strengths of existing anchors in both the entertainment and neighborhood service arenas while expanding offerings to both area hospitals and the U.C. student population. New, higher density housing has been proposed throughout the district. Complimentary commercial tenancing may be organized around a "Pop Culture" theme identifiable with a high percentage of existing tenants. Like the Ludlow Area, The Short Vine district is envisioned to once again be a walk-able district with high quality streets and public spaces, unique and one-of-a-kind tenants, and a strong neighborhood service mix that could include a new transit hub, senior center, and/or other social service spaces.



Urban Assessment Diagram

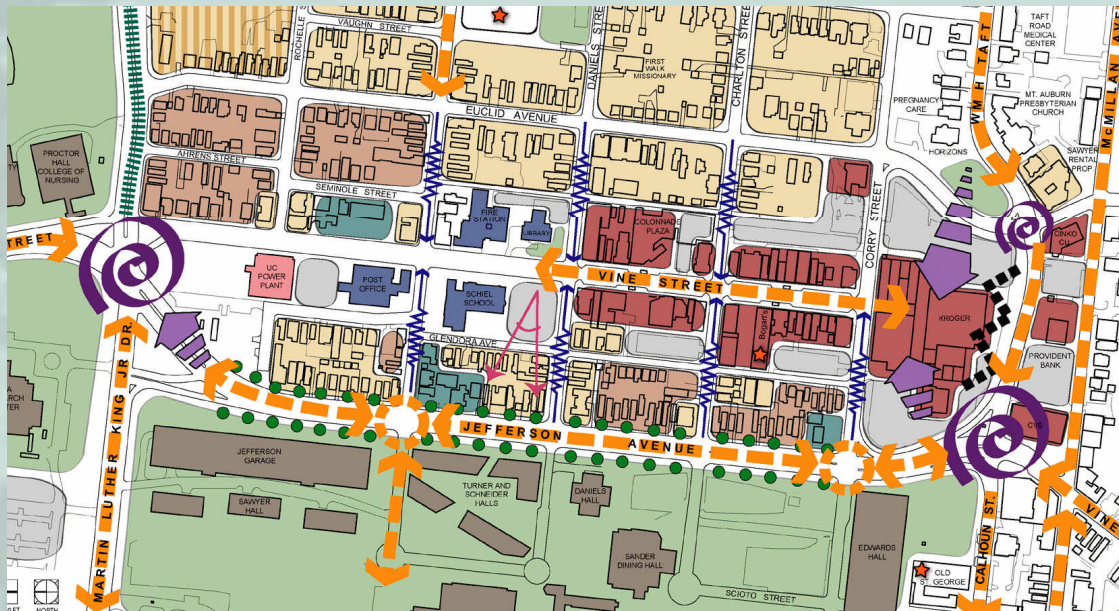


Streets & Spaces

- Rich History & Quality Architecture
- Strong Civic Identity from Library, Fire Station, Recreation Center and Scheil School



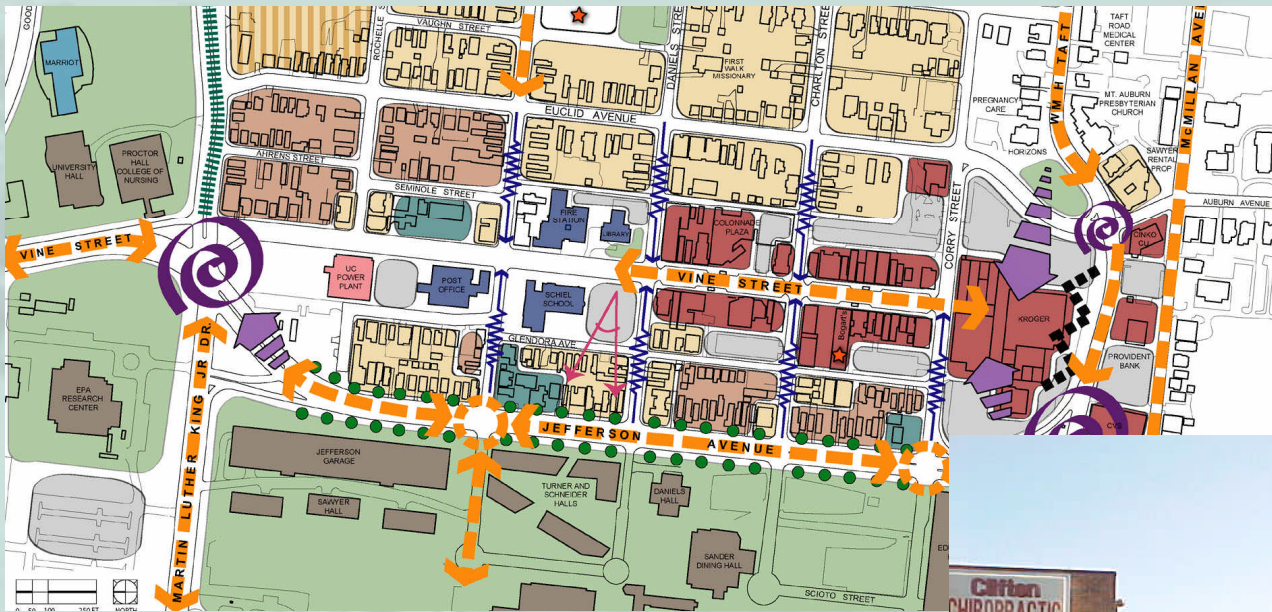
Streets & Spaces



- Lack of Identity at Vine & Taft, MLK, & Jefferson Cross-streets
- Jefferson not pedestrian friendly



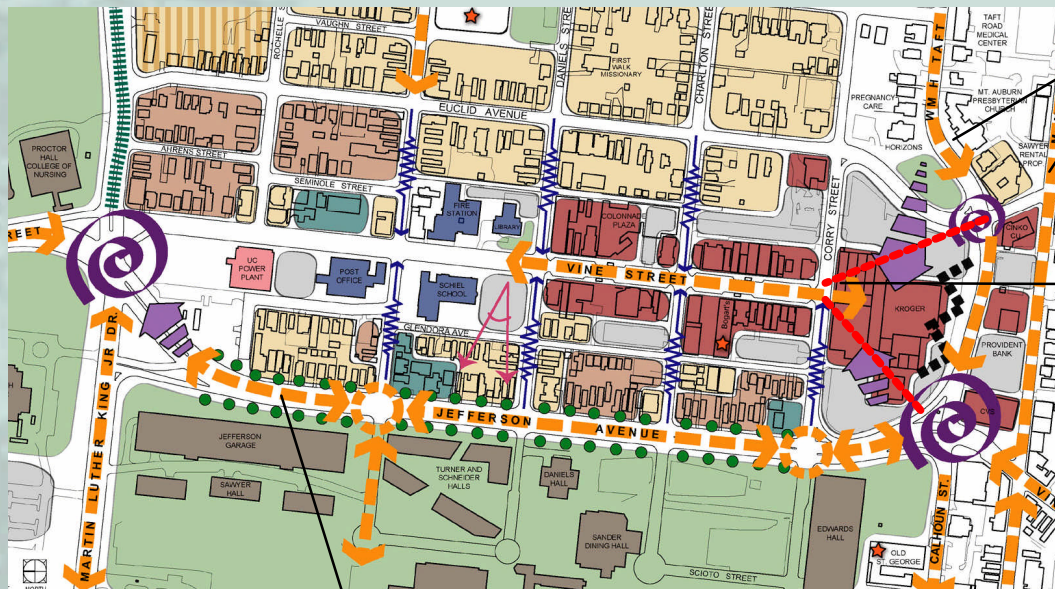
Streets & Spaces



- The district lacks appropriate public gathering spaces that compliment adjacent businesses and enhance local environmental appeal.



Linkages & Connections



One-way pairs at McMillan & Taft by-pass district

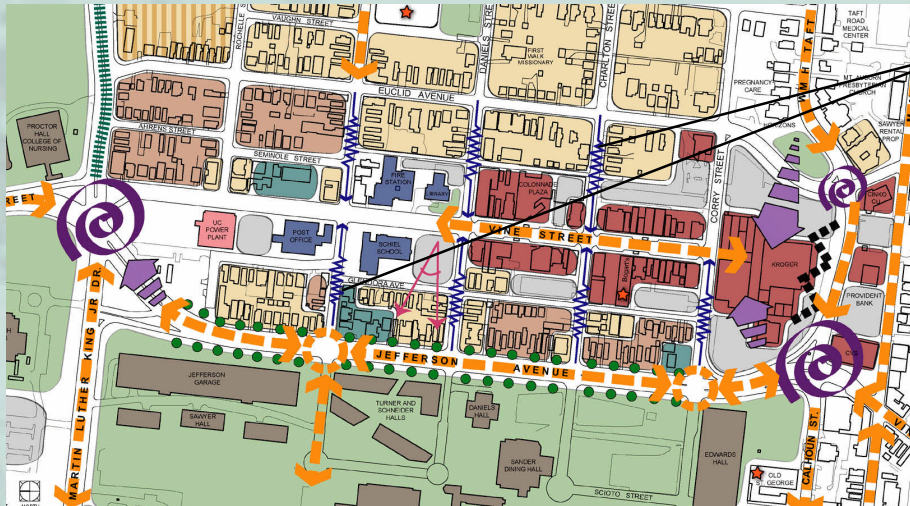
Vine Street commercial disconnected

Jefferson has replaced Vine as the principle regional feeder along the east edge of campus



1930 Sanborn plat

Linkages & Connections



East-west streets are un-inviting /
lack pedestrian appeal



University Village Urban

Land Uses & Tenanting



- Retail uses are primarily south of Daniels
- High Concentration of Tatoo & Body Art
- Kroger site is dated / disengaged from corridor & neighborhood
- Civic uses are concentrated around University & Daniels
- High incidence of dilapidated housing stock near Vine
- Housing (overall) better than past years & improving



Environmental Quality



Maintenance & upkeep of storefronts is not on par with competing districts



Stakeholder In-put

Task Force Meetings to Date:

#1 - August 2003 *Kick-off Meeting*

- SWOT Survey
- Questionnaire

#2 - Sept. 16 *Stakeholder Meeting*

#3 - October 20 & 21, 2003 *Planning & Design Charrette*

#4 - December 1, 2003 - *Interim Report Presentation*

#5 - March 1, 2004 - *Preliminary Plan Presentation*

#6 - June 14, 2003 *Task Force Meeting*

Group Meetings held to date:

- *UVA, Big 5, Residents*